

THE SUN-BULLETIN—FRANK BEAL

Ralph Hocking, director of the Community Center for Television Production, in downtown Binghamton, hopes to raise the area's TV literacy rate.

Can your TV pass his literacy test?

By PATRICK O'NEIL

Do you curse at your television tube?

Do you call it "boob tube," "idiot box," "cyclops," and "#*@+*#*?"

Do you agree with that government official in the 1960s who called it a vast wasteland?

If you do, then the place for you may be the Community Center For Television Production, where they hope through community do-it-yourself projects to make the wasteland bloom.

Ralph Hocking, the director of the center and a member of the cinema faculty at SUNY Binghamton, and Kenneth Dominick, the center's coordinator, have a goal: to raise the "TV literacy rate" for the Binghamton area and perhaps for the nation.

Partially funded by the New York State Council on the Arts, the center operates with second-hand equipment out of a makeshift but spacious studio over a store at 164 Court St. in Binghamton.

One of its functions has been to provide one-half-inch video

tape equipment for people in the community who wish to try their hand at creating television programs.

"What we are doing here basically is exploring what television might become," Mr. Hocking said.

"The control of television cannot stay in the hands of a few networks but must be dispersed throughout the community so a diverse community 'voice' is formed," he said.

Cable television, according to Mr. Hocking, is the way of the future since the Federal Communications Commission has lifted a six-year ban that restricted cable expansion.

When cable reaches its full potentials, there will be an almost limitless range and variety of programming, according to Mr. Hocking. "The networks will probably become like wire-services," he said.

New York City has already opened up its cable system to small groups of interested experimenters to break the monopoly of the big stations, according to Mr. Hocking.

Some local high school stu-

dents have developed reports for classes using the video-taping equipment. Mr. Hocking cited a case of a student's reporting on the local ecological situation for a social studies class with a video-taped program.

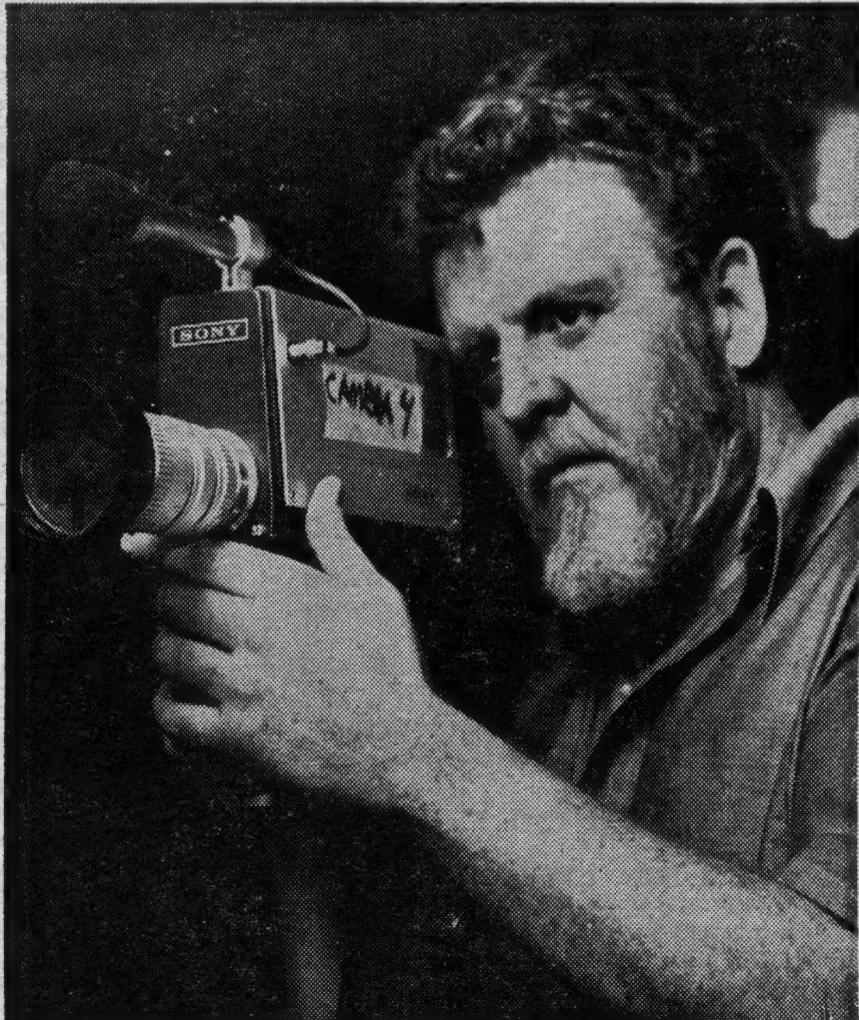
Some students from SUNY Binghamton have taken independent studies courses with Mr. Hocking for college credit.

A collection of experimenter-made tapes is being developed for viewing by those interested.

Some of the tapes made in the studio include a dance group performing its ballets, a local band, a psychedelic tape produced by feeding the image captured by the camera into a television being photographed.

The center also possesses a video-tape produced in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of New York City showing conditions in that ghetto.

"Everyone's welcome to come in and use our facilities to attempt to develop their own ideas about where TV ought to be going; I try to keep things loose here," Mr. Hocking said.



Ralph Hocking's aim is to make a wasteland bloom.